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SIPDIS
EMBASSY KHARTOUM PASS TO CG JUBA

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SUBJECT: "NO ONE TO TURN TO"-SAVE THE CHILDREN REPORT OF
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE BY UN PEACEKEEPERS AND AID
WORKERS

¶1. This is an action request. Department requests USUN to approach appropriate UN Secretariat officials regarding the recent Save the Children UK report, &No One to Turn To,8 which details sexual exploitation and abuse of minors by UN peacekeepers and aid workers in southern Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, and Haiti. USUN should draw from the discussion elements in paragraph 2 below. Department also requests Embassies Port-au-Prince and Abidjan, and CG Juba, to approach appropriate host nation authorities about the alleged abuses in their territories, and to report on collaboration and next steps between the host countries and UN and non-governmental organization (NGO) personnel. Posts should draw from the discussion elements in paragraph 3 below. For background on the report, see paragraph 5.

¶2. USUN is instructed to draw from the following discussions elements.

Begin discussion elements.

-We are deeply concerned by the allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation of minors by peacekeepers and aid workers detailed in the Save the Children report, &No One to Turn To.8 We take these accusations very seriously.

-We appreciate Secretary General Ban openly welcoming the report's frank assessment, and his emphasis on &zero-tolerance8 for sexual exploitation by UN personnel. We support his pledge to investigate these allegations and to take any appropriate &necessary measures,8 and would appreciate information about what such measures would be, including efforts to proactively reach out to children.

-We are pleased the UN has taken steps to address sexual exploitation and abuse, including establishing conduct and discipline units in all UN missions and strengthening training for UN personnel. We also note all of the good work that NGOs, many of whom are implementing partners of UN agencies, have undertaken since the last Save the Children UK report, including establishing Codes of Conduct consistent with the Interagency Agency Standing Committee (IASC) six principles, as well as conducting investigations training for their staff.

-The U.S. recognizes that one of the largest obstacles to governance of peacekeepers in UN missions is that the UN must rely on troop contributing countries to screen their own soldiers, and to punish them if they have committed abuses. Therefore, we encourage the UN to follow up with troop contributing countries to determine what actions they have taken against peacekeepers who have been found guilty of abusive acts.

-The U.S. also acknowledges that UN peacekeepers are not the only persons committing these acts) the issue goes beyond peacekeeping activities and involves UN staff writ-large as well as other humanitarian personnel. Therefore, we take note of UN spokeswoman Michele Montas, statement that the UN

needs to strengthen its investigative capacity, and would welcome information as to what increased measures the UN will take in this regard. Additionally, we ask the UN to share what steps it has taken or plans to take to enhance reporting mechanisms, and ways in which it is collaborating/will collaborate with other humanitarian personnel (i.e., NGO partners).

-We also request that the Secretary General periodically report to the Security Council on the outcome of UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) investigations, and of any proceedings against the perpetrators of abuse. This exchange of information can assist the Secretariat and Security Council to better implement the zero tolerance policy on sexual abuse.

End discussion elements.

¶3. Embassies Port-au-Prince and Abidjan, and CG Juba, are instructed to draw from the following discussions elements.

-We are very concerned about the allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation of minors by peacekeepers and aid workers detailed in the Save the Children UK report, &No One to Turn To,8 and take these accusations seriously. We express our sincere condolences for the victims of these abuses.

-The U.S. is approaching UN Secretariat officials to discuss the accusations in the report, and to show our support for Secretary General Ban's pledge to investigate the allegations and to take any &necessary measures.8

-We would appreciate any information about how your government is collaborating with the UN peacekeeping mission in your country to prevent such abusive acts. We would also appreciate information on any measures that can be taken by your government against perpetrators, or to support further investigations.

¶4. Department requests that embassies Port-au-Prince, Abidjan, and Khartoum report on collaboration and next steps between the host countries and UN and NGO personnel.

¶5. BACKGROUND

In May 2008, Save the Children UK released a twenty-eight page report titled &No One to Turn To,8 which details allegations of physical and verbal abuse, prostitution, and trafficking of children by UN peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. The report was based on interviews with aid workers, peace and security professionals, and two hundred and fifty children ages ten to seventeen in Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, and southern Sudan. Researchers maintain that victims included children as young as six, who were orphans, dependent on humanitarian assistance, or had been separated from their families. They also noted that a majority of the assaults go unreported to local or UN authorities, either out of the victim's shame or feelings of hopelessness, therefore it is impossible to determine just how widespread the problem is.

In the report, UN peacekeepers are &identified as a particular source of abuse.8 However, authors praised the UN for improving its reporting and investigative procedures, and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) for exhibiting &managerial courage and transparency8 in making allegations public. Following the report's release, UN Secretary General Ban called the sexual abuse of minors a &very serious issue,8 and reiterated his zero-tolerance policy for these acts by UN personnel. Ban also pledged to further investigate the allegations, and to take &necessary measures8 when appropriate.

In 2006, the UN received three hundred and seventy one allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse against children and adults by UN personnel. Figures showed that less than half of these complaints were resolved within one year.

